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FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Addendum

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/559/Add.1) on the financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). During the course of its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information to the Committee.

2. In his report to the Security Council of 14 December 1994, 1/ the Secretary-General informed the Council that, given the large number of applications received as at the end of November 1994, the only way to complete identification and registration of eligible voters in a reasonable time would be through a major reinforcement of personnel and the establishment of six additional centres, each to include two identification and registration teams and five mobile identification and registration teams. This would add a total of 17 identification and registration teams to the Mission, bringing the total number of teams to 25. The Secretary-General also expressed the hope that, by 31 March 1995, the progress achieved in the identification and registration process would reach a level that would permit him to recommend 1 June 1995 as the date for the start of the transitional period.

3. In its resolution 973 (1995) of 13 January 1995, the Security Council approved the expansion of MINURSO as proposed in paragraphs 17 to 19 of the report of the Secretary-General and expressed the hope that every effort would be made to deploy the observers necessary to complete the identification process in a timely fashion in accordance with the Settlement Plan.

4. The Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it by 31 March 1995 to confirm the arrangements with regard to the logistic, personnel and other resources required for the deployment of MINURSO at full strength, on his final plans for implementing all elements of the Settlement Plan and on the responses of the parties to his proposals in order to fulfil the United Nations Mission in Western Sahara. The Security Council also decided that the mandate of MINURSO should continue to 31 May 1995 and that it would consider the possible extension of the mandate after 31 May 1995 on the basis of a further report from the Secretary-General and in the light of progress achieved towards the holding of the referendum and the implementation of the Settlement Plan.

5. The Advisory Committee was informed that in his report to the Security Council to be submitted by 31 March 1995, the Secretary-General was going to report that the transitional period would probably not start in June 1995. With regard to the progress of the identification and registration process, the Committee was informed that, while in December 1994 the Mission was registering about 1,000 persons a week, that number had been increasing, reaching a peak figure of 700 persons registered on 21 March 1995. As at that date, 21,500 persons had been registered out of a total of 233,000.

6. In its decision 49/466 of 23 December 1994, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the maintenance of the Mission in the amount of $6.4 million gross ($5,937,400 net) for the two-month period from 1 December 1994 to 31 January 1995, and to enter into commitments for the month of January 1995 in the additional amount of $2.2 million gross, subject to the decision of the Security Council on the deployment of the required staff for the acceleration of the work of the Identification Commission and the review by the Advisory Committee.

7. In its letter of 10 February 1995 (see annex), the Advisory Committee concurred with the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the operation of the Mission in an amount not to exceed $17,290,100 gross ($16,130,300 net) for the period from 1 January to 31 March 1995. That commitment authorization was made under the terms of General Assembly decision 49/466 in the amount of $5.4 million gross ($5,168,700 net) and under the terms of resolution 49/233 on administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations in the amount of $11,890,100 gross ($10,961,600 net).

8. Information on the status of contributions is provided in paragraph 19 of the report of the Secretary-General. As indicated in the table therein, total outstanding assessments of $21,098,548 are due from Member States. The Advisory Committee, as it has in the past, stresses the importance of outstanding contributions being paid in full.

9. In paragraph 30 of his report, the Secretary-General outlines the actions to be taken by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session in connection with the financing of MINURSO.

10. The Advisory Committee welcomes the information on voluntary contributions in section V of the report of the Secretary-General. However, it is the view of the Committee that that information could be further improved by indicating how

the contributions are being utilized and the effects (if any) of that use on the budgetary estimate.

11. Section VIII of the report provides information on the status of reimbursements to troop-contributing States. In that connection, the Committee was informed that full reimbursement of troop costs in accordance with the standard rates of reimbursement had been made for the period ending 31 August 1994.

12. In paragraph 24 of his report, the Secretary-General estimates the cost of the operation of MINURSO for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 at $36,785,000 gross ($33,877,300 net). Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that, owing to a recalculation of costs for rental of premises and aviation fuel, the cost estimates for the period should be stated as $36,381,000 gross ($33,473,300 net); a corrigendum will be issued. The Committee was also informed that, owing to a delay in the deployment of MINURSO staff, savings would result amounting to $1,055,900 gross ($909,500 net). Thus, the estimated cost of MINURSO for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 becomes $35,325,100 gross ($32,563,800 net). Of those amounts, start-up costs total $2,540,800. The monthly cost estimate of the Mission for the period after 30 June 1995 amounts to $5,619,400 gross ($5,123,000 net). Annexes I and II to the report provide a summary statement and supplementary information on the cost estimates.

13. The Advisory Committee notes in paragraph 1 of annex II that effective 1 July 1994 a mission subsistence allowance rate of $60 was established throughout the mission area and paid to all mission staff except local staff. Food and accommodation are also provided. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that the rate of $60 included provision of $40 for incidental expenses ($5 recreation and leisure, $5 telephone, $5 transportation and $25 other incidentals), $15 hardship (eastern Algeria and Mauritania, except for Nouakchott, have been classified by the International Civil Service Commission at the "E" level) and $5 for supplementary food.

14. With regard to death and disability compensation, the Advisory Committee was informed that since 1991 no death had occurred in the mission area as a result of hostilities.

15. The Advisory Committee notes that an additional 105 civilian police monitors, 124 international staff (51 Professional, 67 General Service, 6 Field Service) and 35 local staff are being requested. All of the additional staff requested are for work connected with the Identification Commission and the Advisory Committee recommends that they be approved. At the same time, the Committee questions the need to fill vacancies in other areas, such as administration. As can be seen from annex IV to the report of the Secretary-General, as at 1 January 1995, 273 posts were encumbered out of an authorized total of 306 (33 vacancies). The Committee was informed that, as at 22 March, there were 23 vacancies, all in administration except for the posts of Chief, Civilian Police Division, and Chief, Military Division, each at the D-2 level. The Committee understands that recruitment for both D-2 posts is well under way. The Committee notes that the productivity indicated in paragraph 5 above occurred despite the current vacancy situation. Under the circumstances,

and bearing in mind that all posts for the Identification Commission, including support staff, are recommended for approval, the Committee recommends that the remaining 21 vacancies not be filled at the present stage until such time as the Secretary-General can justify that the workload warrants it; in the meantime, the resultant savings would be $592,500 gross ($495,200 net). These reductions are over and above the reduction of $1,055,900 referred to in paragraph 12 above.

16. The Committee notes from paragraphs 49 and 51 of annex II to the report that a provision is made for the emplacement and rotation travel of international civilian personnel and a provision of $39,200 is made for official travel for 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 and $5,600 per month after 30 June 1995. The Committee considers emplacement and rotation travel part of staff entitlements, which should be reflected under the object of expenditure "common staff costs". As indicated in paragraph 45 of annex II, a reduction for such travel in the amount of $142,600 has already been made under common staff costs; that amount should be restored and the provision for emplacement and rotation travel of civilian personnel eliminated - the net budgetary change is therefore a reduction of $142,600 for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 (the difference between the amount of $285,200 shown in paragraph 49 and the reduction of $142,600 shown in paragraph 45, which is being restored). Monthly costs thereafter, as shown in paragraph 49 of annex II, should also be deleted. As far as the provision of $39,200 for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 and $5,600 monthly after 30 June 1995 for official travel of staff is concerned, the Committee is of the view that a monthly trip to New York is not necessary and that the number of official trips between the mission area and New York should be reduced by 50 per cent. Accordingly, the related provision for official travel should be reduced by $19,600 for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 and $2,800 for the monthly cost for the period after 30 June 1995.

17. The Advisory Committee notes in paragraph 59 of annex II to the report of the Secretary-General that negotiations are currently under way with one Government to provide offices/accommodation to the additional MINURSO personnel in connection with the expansion of the Identification Commission. However, the outcome is at present uncertain. In view of this, additional provision is made for the rental of 50 apartments at a cost of $156,200. The Committee requests that in his next report on MINURSO the Secretary-General provide information on the occupancy of the apartments, as well as other accommodation provided by the United Nations to staff.

18. Provision is also made in paragraph 61 of annex II to the report for alterations and renovation of premises. Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that alterations would be made to premises provided by Governments to MINJRSO throughout the mission area and to premises rented by the Mission.

19. In paragraph 72 of annex II, provision is made for the cost of the shipping of 57 additional vehicles to the mission area, estimated at $166,700. In its letter of 10 February 1995 (see annex), the Advisory Committee reiterated its recommendation contained in paragraph 18 of its report on the financing of MINURSO (A/49/771) that the Secretary-General review the current fleet of vehicles in the Mission with a view to reducing the number of vehicles. The

Committee notes in paragraph 27 (b) and 28 of the report of the Secretary-General that the recommendation of the Committee has been taken into account in the preparation of the cost estimate.

20. The Advisory Committee notes in paragraph 27 (b) (v) of the report of the Secretary-General that out of the 284 vehicles of the Mission, 6 vehicles were due to be written off. However, the Committee also notes that the cost estimates for spare parts, repairs and maintenance, petrol and vehicle insurance were based on 284 vehicles. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that the cost estimates for spare parts should be reduced by $4,200 for 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 and $600 per month after 30 June 1995, and vehicle insurance by $900 for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 and $100 per month after 30 June 1995. The Committee was also informed that provision for petrol, oils and lubricants was based on average monthly costs of $56,500 per month and that therefore they should not be adjusted. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the estimate for spare parts and insurance be reduced by a total of $5,100 for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 and $700 for the monthly cost thereafter.

21. With regard to air operations, provision is made for the rental of four medium-sized helicopters for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995, to be reduced to three after 16 March, two fixed-wing aircraft for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 and one additional fixed-wing aircraft from 1 February to 30 June 1995. The Advisory Committee notes that while the cost of aviation fuel for helicopters is estimated at a rate of $0.55 per litre, it is at a rate of $0.494 per litre for the fixed-wing aircraft. Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that the cost of aviation fuel in the mission area varied from $0.47 per litre at Laayoune to $0.55 per litre elsewhere, depending on the supplementary transportation charges. Therefore, for the purposes of the budget estimates and taking into account the proposed 15 additional flying hours per month for one fixed-wing aircraft for the period after 30 June 1995, the highest cost of fuel ($0.55 per litre) was applied to four helicopters (three helicopters from March 1995), which consume 850 litres of fuel per hour, and $0.494 per litre average cost was applied to three fixed-wing aircraft which consume 1,200 litres.

22. With regard to communications for MINURSO, the Advisory Committee, in its letter of 10 February 1995, requested justification for the additional earth station. The Committee notes the explanation provided in paragraph 29 (b) of the report of the Secretary-General, inter alia, that "it would not be cost-effective to use an INMARSAT terminal, since the intensive use of INMARSAT would reach the acquisition cost of an earth station within a few weeks". In view of that explanation, the Committee recommends approval of the acquisition of the satellite earth station to be used specifically by the Identification Commission. For the same reasons, however, and in view of the fact that five INMARSAT stations are already at the mission headquarters, the Committee does not see the need for the additional six INMARSAT stations. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the estimate be reduced by $84,000, the cost of the six INMARSAT stations. The related user charges to be deducted amount to $35,000 for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 and $5,000 per month thereafter.

23. With regard to the value of assets to be shipped from ONUMOZ, it is the view of the Committee that in keeping with paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 49/235 of 10 March 1995, only the cost of freight should be taken into account (see A/49/559/Add.1, annex II, para. 109 (b)). This involves a reduction of $625,000. Similarly, with regard to generators (ibid., para. 124), it is the view of the Advisory Committee that since the 20 generators are going to be shipped from ONUMOZ, the estimate should be reduced by $185,000, the total value of the generators.

24. The Advisory Committee notes in paragraphs 120 and 132 of annex II that provision is made for an amount of $202,300 under data-processing equipment and $124,700 under miscellaneous equipment. In the opinion of the Committee efforts should be made to get items from existing stock of other missions and from Brindisi.

25. Provision is made in paragraph 151 for a total of $101,000 for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 and $14,000 per month after 30 June 1995 for medical supplies. Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that because of the departure of the Swiss Medical Unit in June 1994 and following the deployment of the Medical Unit from South Korea between August and October 1994, it was essential to provide the incoming medical team with the necessary supplies and to create a reasonable stock. It is envisaged that medical supplies will have to be replenished at the beginning of the second half of 1995, owing to the proposed increase in the number of staff of the Mission.

26. Taking into account its comments in paragraphs 15, 16, 20, 22 and 23 above, the Advisory Committee recommends appropriation and assessment of an amount of $28,839,700 gross ($26,556,300 net) for the maintenance of MINURSO for the period from 1 December 1994 to 31 May 1995. Depending on extension of the mandate by the Security Council after 31 May 1995, the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be authorized to enter into commitments not exceeding $4,806,600 gross ($4,426,000 net) for the month of June 1995 and that that amount be assessed. For the period from 1 July to 31 December 1995, depending on such action as the Council may take with regard to the mandate of MINURSO, the Committee recommends approval of commitment authority in the amount of $33,555,000 gross ($30,576,600 net) to be committed and assessed at a monthly rate not to exceed $5,592,500 gross ($5,096,100 net).

Notes

1/ S/1994/1420.

ANNEX

Letter dated 10 February 1995 from the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions addressed to the Secretary-General

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the Controller's letter of 31 January 1995 requesting the Committee's concurrence to enter into commitments in the amount of $23,003,100 gross ($21,353,400 net) for the maintenance of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for the period from 1 January to 30 April 1995, pending the submission of your report on the financing of MINURSO to the General Assembly.

As recalled in the Controller's letter, in your report to the Security Council of 14 December 1994 (S/1994/1420), you informed the Council that given the large number of applications received as at the end of November 1994, the only way to complete identification and registration of eligible voters in a reasonable time would be through a major reinforcement of personnel and the establishment of six additional centres, each to include two identification and registration teams and five mobile identification and registration teams. This would add a total of 17 identification and registration teams to the Mission, bringing the total number of registration and identification teams to 25.

In the addendum to your report to the Council of 19 December 1994 (S/1994/1420/Add.1), you informed the Council that the estimated cost of the proposed expansion of the Identification Commission of MINURSO for the seven-and-a-half-month period from 1 January to 15 August 1995 would be approximately $18.1 million. The staffing of the Mission would provide for an additional 105 civilian police monitors, 124 international staff, 35 locally recruited staff as well as 12 observers from the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

In its resolution 973 (1995), the Security Council approved the expansion of MINURSO as proposed in paragraphs 17 to 19 of your report and expressed the hope that every effort would be made to deploy the observers necessary to complete the identification process in a timely fashion in accordance with the Settlement Plan.

The Security Council requested you to report to it by 31 March 1995 to confirm the arrangements with regard to the logistic personnel and other resources required for the deployment of MINURSO at full strength and on your final plans for implementing all elements of the Settlement Plan. The Security Council also decided that the mandate of MINURSO should continue to 31 May 1995.

As recalled in the Controller's letter, in its decision 49/466 of 23 December 1994, the General Assembly authorized you to enter into commitments for the maintenance of the Mission in the amount of $6.4 million gross ($5,937,400 net) for the two-month period from 1 December 1994 to 31 January 1995.

The General Assembly also authorized you to enter into commitments for the month of January 1995 in the additional amount of $2.2 million gross, subject to the decision of the Security Council on the deployment of the required staff for the acceleration of the work of the Identification Commission and the review by the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee notes that the amount of $2.2 million authorized by the General Assembly relates to the emplacement of the additional personnel to the mission area, acquisition of additional vehicles, communications equipment, data-processing equipment, office furniture and equipment, and other start-up costs for the expansion of the MINURSO Identification Commission.

Of the $23 million being requested for the period from 1 January to 30 April 1995, an amount of $12.8 million relates to the maintenance of MINURSO at $3.2 million per month and $10.2 million is for the expansion of the Identification Commission and provision for the additional 35 international staff, 6 military observers and 6 civilian police monitors for the period from 1 January to 30 April 1995.

With regard to staff resources, the Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the need for an additional 105 civilian police monitors, 124 international staff (51 Professional, 67 General Service and 6 Field Service) and 35 local staff, is not clearly explained in relation to the 55 civilian police monitors, 196 international staff (81 Professional, 78 General Service and 37 Field Service) and 55 local staff authorized as at 1 December 1994.

The Committee was informed that the common staff costs were based on full standards. In the opinion of the Committee, given the nature of MINURSO, expenditure under many of the standard elements used in the calculation of common staff costs may, in the course of this period, not arise at all or may not be necessary to the full extent. In this connection, the Committee requests that this estimate be reviewed with a view to achieving economies.

Provision is made for 57 vehicles for the expansion of the Identification Commission. This is in addition to the 260 vehicles already in the mission area. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls and reiterates its recommendation contained in its report on the financing of MINURSO (A/49/771) that you should "review the current fleet of vehicles in the Mission with a view to reducing the number of vehicles. Furthermore, the fleet of vehicles should be justified in terms of the established standard ratios of vehicles to different categories of staff and personnel, and by the operational requirements of the Mission".

The Advisory Committee believes that the request for a third fixed-wing aircraft needs to be further justified.

With regard to communications, it is proposed to install one satellite earth station at Tindouf, Algeria, in addition to the one at Laâyoune. The Advisory Committee observes that no explanation was provided as to the need for the additional earth station.

As indicated in the Controller's letter, you intend to submit a report on MINURSO to the Security Council by 31 March under the terms of resolution 973 (1995); the decision of the Security Council on the future of MINURSO beyond 31 May 1995 may have budgetary implications. Accordingly, it is the view of the Advisory Committee that a budget for MINURSO for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 should be presented to the General Assembly at its resumed forty-ninth session in March 1995. Depending on such action as the Security Council may take on MINURSO with regard to the period beyond 31 May 1995, a further budget could be prepared for the period from 1 July to 31 December 1995, which could be considered by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly in June 1995. The budget presentation for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 should be along the lines of the information annexed to the Controller's letter and should take into account the comments of the Advisory Committee in the paragraphs above. In order to enable you to finish preparation of the budget and to allow time for action upon it by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee concurs in your entering into commitments in an amount not exceeding $17,290,100 gross ($16,130,300 net) for the period from 1 January to 31 March 1995. This authorization takes into account the latest information on actual requirements for the period from 1 January to 31 March 1995 as provided by your representatives and is made under the terms of General Assembly decision 49/466 on the financing of MINURSO in the amount of $5.4 million gross ($5,168,700 net) and under the terms of paragraph 2, section IV, of General Assembly resolution 49/233 of 23 December 1994 on administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations in the amount of $11,890,100 gross ($10,961,600 net).

(Signed) C. S. M. MSELLE
Chairman